

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, GUILDHALL ON
TUESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2018**

MEMBERS

Councillor Mark Pritchard, Chair
Councillor Hugh Jones, Vice-Chair

Councillor	Andrew Atkinson	Councillor	D J Griffiths
“	William Baldwin	“	David Kelly
“	* David A Bithell	“	Joan Lowe
“	Terry Evans	“	Phil Wynn

*Absent

Also Present – Councillors Brian Cameron, Dana Davies, Michael Dixon, Frank Hemmings, Adrienne Jeorrett, Gwenfair Jones, Marc Jones, Paul Roberts, Graham Rogers and John Pritchard

74 FORMER COUNCILLOR IAN ROBERTS

The Chair referred to the recent death of former Councillor Ian Roberts. As a mark of respect, Members stood for a minute silence.

75 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor David A Bithell

76 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS, IF ANY

Members were reminded of their responsibility, under Paragraph 11 of the Members' Code of Conduct, to declare any interests in relation to any of the business to be transacted at this Meeting. The following declarations were made:

Agenda Item 9 – Updated Local Planning Guidance Note 27: Developer Contributions to Schools

Councillors Brian Cameron, Frank Hemmings, Joan Lowe, John Pritchard and Graham Rogers – Personal and Prejudicial – School Governors. The Councillors remained in the Meeting and claimed an exemption under Paragraph 12(2) of the Members' Code of Conduct taking part in the discussion, and in the case of Executive Board Members, the voting thereon.

Councillor Adrienne Jeorrett – Personal – School Governor. The Councillor remained in the meeting taking part in the discussion thereon.

77 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 November 2018 be signed as a correct record.

THE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2018 - 2023

The Lead Member for Place – Housing submitted a report (HHE/49/18) seeking approval for the adoption, publication and implementation of the Local Housing Strategy 2018/23, setting out a five year vision for housing needs and housing related services in the County Borough.

The Lead Member presented the report and highlighted the main points contained within it. During discussions, the following issues were raised:

- Acknowledgement that this Strategy gave people more choice in terms of housing options, and in particular, the option to stay in their own homes.
- Clarification sought regarding the process for putting forward areas of vacant land.
- Concern at the suggested lack of sufficient enforcement available to tackle empty properties.
- Confirmation that in some cases it was difficult to engage with the owner of empty properties, and in some instances, the owners lived out of the area.
- Confirmation that the Corporate Land and Buildings Strategy Group would be reviewing the criteria for empty properties.
- Confirmation that the Council had not made any agreement with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) regarding the North Wales Growth Bid.

RESOLVED -

- (i) To recommend to Council that the Local Housing Strategy 2018-23 as presented in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of report HHE/49/18 be approved.**
- (ii) That subject to Council approval the Local Housing Strategy 2018-23 be published.**
- (iii) That subject to Council approval the Head of Housing and Economy be authorised to implement the Strategy with immediate effect.**

Reasons for decisions

- (i) To replace the Local Housing Strategy 2013-18 ensuring that the Council complies with requirements in the Local Government Act 2003 and the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 to have a published housing strategy; and**
- (ii) to ensure that there is a long-term strategy in place for the County Borough to guide Council departments, partners in the private, public and third sectors as well as tenants and residents to address housing and housing related services over the next 5 years.**

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Lead Member for Place – Housing submitted a report (HHE/54/18) seeking

approval for the adoption of both Wrexham County Borough Council's Homelessness Strategy and North Wales Regional Homelessness Strategy, and to approve the action plan as a means of monitoring progress in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Lead Member presented the report and highlighted the main points contained within it. During the debate, the following points were raised:

- Tribute paid to the work of the Housing Team and those involved in helping to reduce substance misuse and behaviour problems in the town centre.
- Importance of linking with neighbouring Welsh and English Authorities in relation to rough sleepers by helping to reconnect them to the area they came from.
- Confirmation that a restructure of the Housing Department was currently ongoing in order to give a more streamlined service.
- Confirmation by Officers that a stand alone strategy to look at rough sleeping locally would be introduced which would consider all types of homelessness.
- Suggestion that ex armed forces personnel had a priority need for housing, but it was acknowledged that they didn't always make it known that they used to be in the forces.
- Welcome news that the indications were that there had been a reduction in the number of rough sleepers compared to last year.

RESOLVED - That both the North Wales Regional Homelessness Strategy and Wrexham County Borough Homelessness Strategy be adopted and the action plan of the County Borough Homelessness Strategy be approved as an effective means of measuring progress in achieving strategic aims.

Reasons for decision

Section 50 of Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires every local authority in Wales to have carried out a review of its homelessness services and to have produced a Homelessness Strategy by the end of 2018. By approving the attached draft documents, the Council will ensure that it meets its statutory obligations. In addition, it will enable the Council to set out how it will deal with homelessness and ensure that the services provided meet current and future challenges.

80

STIWT

The Lead Member for People – Communities, Partnerships, Public Protection and Community Safety submitted a report (HHE/47/18) asking Members to approve a further three years funding to support the Stiwt Trust to deliver a programme of Welsh Cultural activities and to approve a capital contribution to essential building works.

RESOLVED -

- (i) That the Head of Housing and Economy be authorised to provide a grant for a further three years at a consistent £30,433 per annum to the**

Stiwt Trust to deliver a programme of arts and cultural activities to support the priorities in the Council Plan for three years (April 2019-March 2022).

- (ii) That the Head of Housing and Economy be authorised to provide a one off capital contribution of £25,000 from the Councils Heritage and Well-being Capital fund.**
- (iii) That the Head of Housing and Economy be authorised to negotiate and conclude the terms and conditions for the extension of the arrangements for the Rhos Housing Estate Office to be located at the Stiwt for a further 3 years.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To continue to assist the Stiwt Trust so that it can continue to provide a Welsh cultural facility for the County Borough, providing access for children and young people to experience cultural opportunities and a facility for the wider community.

81 EQUALITY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017-18

The Lead Member for People – Youth Services and Anti-Poverty submitted a report (HF/134/18) to provide Members with an update on progress in implementing the Council's Strategic Equality Plan during 2017-18.

The Lead Member presented the report and highlighted the main points contained within it. In response to a Members' question, he pointed out that there had recently been some non-targeted training for Members which had been well attended. He stated that targeted training on the equality impact assessments would also be arranged as it was important for all concerned to understand the impact on people in poverty and on anyone with a protected characteristic.

RESOLVED - That the progress on implementing the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20, described in the Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 20 Annual Report 2017-18 (Appendix 1 of HF/134/18) be approved.

Reason for decision

To ensure that the Council continues to meet its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and associated regulations.

82 UPDATED LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE 27: DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCHOOLS

(Members declarations of interest in relation to this item are set out in Minute 75 above)

The Lead Member for Organisation – Planning and Corporate Services submitted a report (HEP/95/18) seeking approval for a revised and updated Local Planning

Guidance Note (LPGN) 27 – Developer Contributions to Schools.

RESOLVED - That the updated LPGN 27 – Developer Contribution to Schools, attached at Appendix 1 of HEP/95/18 be adopted as supplementary Planning guidance.

Reason for decision

To provide guidance and an up-to-date framework to enable the Council to secure Planning Obligation contributions to fund increased school capacity where this is necessary as a result of new housing developments of 4 or more dwellings.

83 DISPOSAL OF LAND FRONTING CRANE STREET, CEFN MAWR

The Lead Member for Economy – Economic Development and Regeneration submitted a report (HHE/49/18) seeking approval to advertise the disposal of an area of land which forms part of informal space on the corner of Crane Street, Cefn Mawr.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the Head of Corporate and Customer Services be authorised to publish notice of the Council’s intention to dispose of the land on the corner of Crane Street Cefn Mawr (as shown edged red on Appendix 2 of HHE/49/18) forming informal public open space in accordance with Section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.**
- (ii) That the Head of Corporate and Customer Services be authorised to report to the Executive Board on any objections received to the intended disposal of the site forming informal public open space but that in the absence of objections the land is disposed of as set out in the report.**

Reason for decision

To enable the Council to dispose of the land on the corner of Crane Street, Cefn Mawr in order to relieve the Council of future maintenance of the land and steps and to include this land with the adjacent Ebenezer Chapel disposal. The plant room that serves the former chapel is located beneath the stone steps and is therefore critical to any future sale of Ebenezer Chapel.

84 QUARTER 2 SUMMARY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19

The Lead Member for Organisation – Finance, Performance, Health and Safety and Governance submitted a report (CLF/08/18) to provide Members with a summary update on progress against the Council Plan as at quarter two 2018/29.

RESOLVED - That the contents of the report be noted and any areas of concern be challenged.

Reason for decision

To enable the Council to monitor performance against the Council Plan.

85

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2019/20

The Lead Member for Organisation – Finance, Performance, Health and Safety and Governance submitted a report (HF/135/18) asking Members to approve a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to commence in April 2019 for the 2019/20 financial year.

RESOLVED – To recommend to Council that:

- (i) The making of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations ("the Prescribed Requirements Regulations") by the Welsh Assembly on 27 November 2013 be noted.**
- (ii) The outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on its local discretions in its Council Tax Reduction Scheme (section 6) be noted.**
- (iii) The Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 be adopted as the Council's Scheme for the Financial Year 2019/20, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise as set out in paragraph 7.1 of report HF/135/18.**
- (iv) The Head of Finance (in consultation with the Leader) be given delegated authority to consider, approve and/or deal with as necessary any amendments which may be made to the "Amendment regulations" following consideration by the National Assembly for Wales when these regulations are laid and approved by Welsh Government.**

Reasons for decisions

- (i) The Council is obliged to approve a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20 under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations by 31 January 2019.**
- (ii) Due to the timing of the spending Review, it is likely that the uprating regulations for Benefits, will not be laid until late December at the earliest, and therefore will not be debated by the National Assembly for Wales until December 2018 at the earliest, as a result it will mean that the amendment regulations will not be approved by the Assembly until late January 2019.**

Councillor Mark Pritchard
Chair